

# **HUMAN LIBRARY: AN ANTI-OPPRESSIVE TOOL**

## **Implementation guidelines of Human Library**

Rahul Pardasani

William Rivera

Thesis, Autumn 2017

Diaconia University of Applied Sciences

Degree Program in Social Work and Community Development

## **ABSTRACT**

Pardasani, Rahul; Rivera, William. Human Library: An Anti-Oppressive tool; Implementation Guidelines of Human Library. Helsinki, Autumn 2017. 45 pages plus 8 appendixes. Language: English. Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Degree Programme in Social Services, focus in Community Development. Degree: Bachelor of Social Services.

The Human Library (HL) method is used globally as an anti-oppressive tool to bring together representatives of different minorities in society, who volunteer to share their life stories and experiences in order to help others overcome prejudice using active dialogue based on respect. The approach can also be used as a tool for social work students to identify their own unconscious biases, reflect on individual blind spots and for competence development to become better professionals working with people from different social and cultural backgrounds. A Human Library event was organized at DIAK's (Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki) headquarters in May 2017. The event brought together more than 120 participants and a very diverse group of representatives of different minorities (Living Books) who were engaged through a non-violent dialogue. About 85,42% of participants responded that were very impressed with the event and 93.75% would recommend the Human Library to others. Based on qualitative data, the Human Library managed to challenge many of the stereotypes about minority groups, served as a platform to introspection regarding marginalization, and helped students to practice many of the professional competences needed in social services.

This thesis aims to serve as guidebook for future events at DIAK or other social work institutions and as an academic material to support the learning process of students in social services, as well as a trigger to produce actions aimed at creating long lasting empathy among different groups.

**Keywords:** Anti-oppressive work, Group Dynamics, Intergroup contact, Human Library

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Human Library celebrated at DIAK was the product of a collective effort of several volunteers who committed in the organization at different phases of the project.

Our deep gratitude to all the Human Books, and to the students who were part of the event management staff for the day of the event.

Special acknowledgements to Michelle Kaila, who was the ideator for bringing the methodology of Human Library to DIAK. She conformed the core team and took the arduous role of internal communications and logistics.

To Aleksanteri Virta, who took a very difficult task in helping to find the suitable volunteers to be the Human Books and applied for the funds of the project. He was the financial coordinator for the event and responsible for budgeting, monitoring expenses and reporting to the stakeholders of the project.

To Alex Livingstone, who contributed with his expertise in security and helped us in designing the security plan for the event and carried out the important role of security steward.

To Johnny Abdullah, for his help in taking pictures at the day of the event, supporting in collecting feedback data and hosting the after party at the Human Library.

To Daniel George Palmer, for his support in proofreading the document.

To Marianne Nylund, who believed in the team's capacity to carry out this project. She always showed her enthusiasm in this event and enormously helped the team in communicating with the management of the school. We are sure many doors opened to us due to her valuable contribution and guidance.

To Hanna Lamberg, for her guidance in ethical considerations and research permits for the thesis, for clarifying the objectives for the thesis and her invaluable and comprehensive advice for this final report to come into a good shape.

To the student union O'Diako for supporting the event financially and to DIAK for hosting the event and support with the management throughout all stages of the project implementation.

This thesis is a result of work by Rahul Pardasani and William Rivera who were a part of the core project team. Rahul Pardasani was responsible for overall use of social media, communications, production of videos and photography before and after the event. He has helped in data collection and analysis, creating video documentary as a side material for the thesis, developing the conclusions and writing the reflections on professional development with the project. William Rivera acted as the project manager and was responsible for timely accomplishments of every tasks, delegation of activities and conforming possible synergies for the project. He has contributed to the development of this thesis by providing the structure for the guidebook, looking into the theoretical aspects of the study and elaborating the implementation process for the project.

## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	6
2. ANTI-OPPRESSIVE WORK AND THE HUMAN LIBRARY.....	8
2.1 Group Dynamics.....	11
2.2 Intergroup Contact.....	13
2.3 Process of the Human Library.....	14
3. THE HUMAN LIBRARY AT DIAK.....	16
3.1 Designing.....	17
3.1.1 Assessment of the Venue.....	19
3.1.2 Schedule of Activities.....	20
3.1.3 Funding.....	21
3.2 Implementation.....	21
3.2.1 Recruiting of volunteers.....	22
3.2.2 Promoting the Human Library.....	23
3.2.3 Trainings.....	23
4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	25
5. EVALUATION.....	28
5.1 Quantitative Indicators.....	29
5.2 Qualitative Indicators.....	33
5.3 Challenges.....	36
5.4 Professional Development.....	37
6. CONCLUSIONS.....	41
7. REFERENCES.....	44
8. APPENDICES.....	47

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Human Library methodology's main objective is to facilitate an effective personal dialogue between people who would usually not have the opportunity to speak to each other, and hence challenge commonplace prejudices and stereotypes (Human Library n.d.). This framework creates an opportunity to speak in a private space to a so called 'stranger' in a structured, protected, but practically unconstrained environment. The Human Library became part of the Council of Europe's programme in 2003. The motto behind its inclusion was the acknowledgment that human rights cannot be defended and promoted by legal documents and laws alone (Human Library n.d.).

The usual setup for the Human Library consists of a mobile library, which serves as a space for dialogue and interaction. Visitors to a Human Library (the readers) are given the opportunity to speak informally with 'people on loan' (the human books); this latter group being varied in age, sex and cultural background (Human Library n.d.).

International students at DIAK usually comprise a very diverse group, where students come from different countries and continents, cultures, beliefs, ages, political affiliations, sexual orientation and personalities converge. This diversity brings in a complex range of intersectional issues emerging from different social identities (Cox et al, 9). As aspiring social workers, it is important to identify our own prejudices and intolerant perspectives during the educational process as we should not be immune to the unconscious biases which are subtle but pervasive, and thus put effort to build our competences as better professionals.

In the description of the Bachelor of Social Services at DIAK, it states very clearly: "The specific focus of the programme is on community development work, having emphasis on people's participation and empowerment, and on identification and fight against different forms of discrimination in societies". Nevertheless, there is always an ethical dilemma about what is the most

culturally sensitive manner in order to prepare international students based on the democratic and inclusive values of the Finnish society.

Therefore, the exercise of anti-oppressive work should start within the professional preparation of the students from the very beginning of the program of social services to help students to be fully equipped to interact with different minorities in the society. The anti-oppressive approach acts as a tool to address migrant communities in understanding new cultural norms, through a very respectful approach, while still maintaining the work on advocating against the different oppressions faced by minorities. The Human Library methodology, which is identified as an anti-oppressive practice tool; offers the possibility to help the participants to overcome their stereotypes and prejudices, but at the same time, is a platform to enhance many of the professional competencies required in the sector of social services.

Based on the implementation of a Human Library event at the DIAK premises in May of 2017, this document will disclose valuable information about how this methodology reached significant outcomes and how international students and professional staff can be the catalysts for implementing and improving this methodology in the future. The objective of this thesis is to serve as a guidebook in itself as a reference for the implementation guidelines, training and promotional material and a resource material for the future Human Library events at DIAK or any other social work institutions.

## 2. ANTI-OPPRESSIVE WORK AND THE HUMAN LIBRARY

In the field of social work, the word oppressive is not necessarily one of the most recurrent adjectives that comes into consideration. In the end, social work, as conceived by the International Federation of Social Workers, is a profession aiming to “promote social change, problem solve in human relationships, and empower people and groups to enhance people’s well-being”. Hence, social workers should abide with the liability of exploring the different types of oppression in the different array of personal and professional relations, as an essential element in adopting the best type of assistance needed to exercise the profession (Hogewoning 2012, 1).

Generally, oppression comes about when an individual’s actions or due to the application of a discriminatory law thwart a person or group of people, because of their association to a community. This might include deprivation of an individual’s basic right to make a fair living, to partake in different facets of social life, or to enjoy basic freedoms and human rights. Additionally, oppression might include foisting any belief systems, values, legal frameworks, and life styles on others, through passive or violent mediums. There is outer oppression, as in the previous cases, but it can also be internal, for instance when communities favour and operate under the dominant external element which produces repression and consider oppressive practices as the ideal system to abide. Therefore, internal oppression often entails self-hatred practices, auto-censorship, ignominy, and the forsaking of individuals or cultural groups (Baines 2012, 2).

Consequently, the aim of anti-oppressive work is based on the awareness of the discriminatory traits of a culture which prevails in a society or community, and how these traditional structures endure over time. This awareness allows us to find ways to curb oppression and contribute towards change. Usually in an anti-oppressive action, minorities are brought to a level of equality and are the main stakeholders (Nzira et al 2009, 39).



In the application of advocacy and anti-oppressive work, there is a constant challenge how to promote better topics related to human rights, cultural diversity and pluralism (Human Library 2011,5).

There is no doubt that prejudice and discrimination are the outcomes of historical and structural inequalities, which shapes individual minds. There are evidences about how the historical mutation of a broader concept of equality, has determined the way societies see discrimination and how it has contributed to the development of important legislation to end inequality. Consequently, language is a powerful tool, as it expresses how we perceive our society and the way we communicate with other individuals (Nzira et al 2009, 77); and language is without doubt, one of the most important elements of the Human Library.

To bring up discussions about anti-oppressive work and provide specific examples to help students dealing with issues in this area, is often a very complex duty; specially when the context in which students and teachers interact, can provide tools and, depending on the case; can halt the progress of learning about anti-oppressive work. The study of legal frameworks and policies not necessarily provides enough tools in the development of anti-oppressive practice. (Dalrymple Et al. 1998, 5).

As Dalrymple & Burke (1998) highlight that it is crucial to acknowledge that there are concepts of power imbalances among the students. This is very important when the teachers want to promote changes to redress balance of power in student-teacher relationships to actively work towards change, otherwise the “educator may perpetuate inequality”. The authors emphasize the importance that educators challenge stereotypes, verifying which are the most common assumptions and to put in action anti-oppressive practice and its teaching even when the situations get cumbersome.

Identifying the Human Library methodology as an anti-oppressive practice tool, some of the students at DIAK had the opportunity to implement the project for their course studies under the guidance of the concerned study advisors. The origins of the Human Library date back to 1993, when five adolescents, affected

by the violent stabbing of a friend in Copenhagen, created a youth organisation called “Stop the Violence”. The organization aimed to reduce youth based violence in the community and to counteract the negative stereotyping of Danish youth that had emerged in the media due to the attack perpetrated against their friend (Human Library, 2016).

By the year 2000, when “Stop the Violence” had more than 30,000 members, the organization was approached by the Roskilde Festival organizers with the aim to create an activity that would build positive connections and dialogue between the many different cultures and groups that usually attend the festival (Human Library, 2016). Roskilde is a large scale music festival that attracts many people from throughout Europe and around the world. That year more than 100,000 people attended the festival. The event that was created for the festival was the first Human Library celebrated, and it featured about 75 Human Books (The Outsiders, 2016).

Since that year, the Human Library movement has extended worldwide, taking place in festivals, museums, art galleries, universities, colleges, schools and adapted for public libraries (The Outsiders, 2016). The Human Library successfully brings together people of different backgrounds and ages, who through a specific dialogue, sit face-to-face to listen and converse about their differences and similarities. Social minorities are given the opportunity to get closer to the so-called majority, and to contribute to overcoming the gap produced by discrimination and prejudice (Human Library n.d.).

As Judy Apps nicely put it her books *The Art of Conversation* “Remember that what gets talked about and how it gets talked about determines what will happen. Or won't happen. And that we succeed or fail, gradually then suddenly, one conversation at a time.”

Therefore, in the Human Library the Human Books are at the core of the project. Without this brave volunteers representing different minority groups, equipped with enough patience and empathy towards those who still suffer from prejudice and open to the idea to share their life stories and experiences, a Human Library cannot succeed and henceforth, we cannot consider it anti-oppressive.

## 2.1 Group Dynamics

A group is considered to be an assortment of individuals who often have contact and interaction, mutual influence, a common feeling of companionship and work together in order to reach an accepted set of goals. Grouping is a crucial element of our social life and our interaction with others can be a highly rewarding experience (Douglas 2000, 25).

Nevertheless, it is not only the synergy of common aspects contributed by each person present in a group. There are different attributes that shape the members' personalities as well. These characteristics were previously seized throughout the life span of the individuals, from their specific societies, cultural backgrounds, nationalities and their participation in other groups (Douglas 2000, 24).

These external aspects of influence are termed as the “constraints” under which a group normally operates and they are determinant for whether the members will succeed in achieving their common goal or fail in their plan (Douglas 2000, 25).

International students at DIAK usually comprise a very diverse group, where students coming from different countries and continents, cultures, beliefs, ages, political affiliation, sexual orientation and personalities converge. The different academic cohorts offer a unique opportunity to learn about different social interplays and processes.

However, it also requires an intentional effort to overcome the obstacles that come along the way and the misunderstandings which might be stemming from those constraints that every person carries with her or himself. Most of the times, individuals are not aware of the influences produced by these external factors infiltrating a group. Frequently, the *raison d'être* of a crisis is wrongly attributed to the most obvious aspects which are more at hand of the individuals. (Douglas 2000, 24.)

In the holistic field of social work, people of different backgrounds, disciplines and experiences, are an asset to a team. Nevertheless, it's not always easy for

individuals to cope with group dynamics and fit into the synergy required for its functioning.

Carl Jung explicitly wrote about what happens when individuals' reactions take place within a group: "The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed" (Jung 2009, 14).

Several of the international students enrolling in the Bachelor of Social Services, come from societies in which the marginalization of certain minority groups is still a human rights issue. This kind of background could offer a very valuable platform in acquiring tools for anti-oppressive practice as future professionals. But also, in some cases represents a constraint for some students to develop their competencies for community work in Finland (Human Rights Centre 2014, 22).

## **2.2 Intergroup contact**

Research has shown that intergroup contact can significantly reduce harmful stereotypes and demonstrated that prejudice and contact are significantly and inversely correlated. This means that, when people who are associated to different groups get in contact with each other, there is a chance for those pre-existing negative stereotypes to be reduced and surpassed (Little et al 2011, 16).

Nevertheless, other academic research has shown that in some cases this positive intergroup contact between privileged members of the society and minority groups, might hinder the possibility of minorities to take to collective action. Likewise, in some cases, this positive interaction has created a fallacious sensation of equality, and hence might balk social change (Reimer et al 2017, 121).

Although, in some cases negative intergroup interaction might trigger collective action by the minority groups, it's very evident that these negative experiences widen the differences between the individuals, increase discrimination, exasperation and prevents the union with one another (Reimer et al 2017, 121).

Apparently, based on new findings, depending on the state of the positive intergroup contact, it can be a successful experience or not. There is no doubt then that positive interaction, enables privileged individuals to join hands in support for those who are most vulnerable in the society (Reimer et al 2017, 121).

It is crucial to note that despite that intergroup contact, as the one which takes place in the Human library, eminently helps to change the perception, negative feelings and prejudice towards the minorities, it does not overcome by its own discrimination unto disadvantage groups and the inequality in the community (Reimer et al 2017, 122). Therefore, the Human Library is just the beginning of a long road.

### **2.3 Process of the Human Library**

The Human Library is a good example of face-to-face communication based prejudice reduction. This methodology propitiates the interaction between different individuals within in a familiar framework, such as the collective archetype of a library.

The library framework helps the participants to easily understand the rules and methodological steps. As in a library the Librarians welcome the Reader (participant) and help in the selection of a Human Book from the Catalogue. The Catalogue is very crucial, as it contains a list of stereotypes, intentionally assembled to be diplomatically provocative and they are produced by each one of the Human Books, based on their own personal experiences (Little et al 2011,17).

This methodology has not been created with the intention to do proselytism of any kind. It does not aim to change people's opinions and beliefs, but it is based on the principle of open and non-violent communication, in order to overcome the fears the participants might have from unknown communities or minorities.

The Living Books are not actors and their cooperation in the Human Library is volunteer based. They represent different human groups, ethnicities, cultures, sexual preferences, professions, among others.

The Human Library participation is a very good platform where people are not dejected from having prejudices, but instead are offered the chance to come face-to-face with them in the form of Living Books (Little et al 2011, 18).

### **Living Book / Human Book**

They are the main and most attractive element of the Human Library. A good selection of Human Books are one of the indicators of success which could be predicted before the event. The Living books are representatives of groups that are at risk of marginalization, prejudice, discrimination and intolerance within a community (Little et al 2011, 33).

### **Librarians**

As in a typical library, the librarians are the first people readers encounter to get information, help and guidance to get the material they are looking for. A good librarian makes a difference to a satisfactory experience at the library. In the same way, librarians at the Human Library are volunteers which are chosen for their empathy and skills to help the participants to find their possible stereotypes in the catalogue of titles with the Living Books or based on the interest of the individual.

**Runners**

This is a role which is not specified in the Human Library Toolkit, and which was copied from a Living Library celebrated in Colombia in the year 2014. As the librarians are busy helping the costumers in the borrowing process, a runner helps the participant to be introduced to the Living Book in the reading area. Keeps the timing of the interaction between readers and books and keep the librarians updated when the Living Books are being available for other readers. They verify that the encounter between readers and books takes place in a respectful and dignified manner and they are the first ones to provide aid in case of an emergency.

**Dictionaries**

Their function is merely as a translator between the readers and Human Books that don't have a language in common. They don't interfere with their opinions or in a condescending manner towards the readers, and have to be very careful to limit their participation to connect the readers and the Living Books despite the language barrier.

### 3. THE HUMAN LIBRARY AT DIAK

Each Human Library event is different and unique, and several resources are needed, such as volunteers, time, commitment, and motivation to make it possible. The Human Library is especially suited for major public events, such as festivals. Nevertheless, it can be also organised as a part of a smaller event or as an event of its own. Each Human Library is a unique happening, and the organiser team can adapt it to suit their specific social and physical environment.

Three things that all Human Library events have in common are: voluntary participation, safety, and the respect for human rights; aspects that will be disclosed deeper in this guide.

No person should be forced or required to participate in the Human Library as a reader or as a Book. The Living Books always represent different minorities and other groups of people that face prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and racism; and their efforts are invaluable for the Human Library. Living Books are not paid, since promoting equality is based on volunteering, not on financial gain. The organiser is responsible for making sure that each librarian and each Book is given adequate information about their tasks, and that each Reader is aware of the Human Library Rules (Rentola, 2014).

Besides this document, it's important to read the Human Library Toolkit in depth, which is attached in the list of references, as this document was adopted throughout the different phases for the Human Library celebrated at DIAK.

The Human Library at DIAK took place on May 3rd of 2017. Organising an event of this kind, requires a considerable amount of effort and none of the following steps should be underestimated. For its implementation, it is required a good level of careful planning, preparation, and committed implementation (Little et al 2011, 20). In order to achieve this, the organizing team started to work four months prior to the event, which can be divided in three main phases: Designing, Implementation and Evaluation of the project.



### **3.1. Designing**

Usually the planning of every project starts by defining the aim and objectives, identification of the needs, stakeholders and beneficiaries, resources and feasibility.

The first activity is to conform a core team, define roles and responsibilities for each member, and the scope that this team would like to have for the project (OECD 2013, 18).

The team was comprised of two students implementing a project for the part of DIAK studies and one student contributed as a part of the placement requirement for the Degree Programme. One of the students took the role of project manager, responsible of the overall stewardship of the project, making sure of the timely accomplishments of every tasks, delegation of activities and conforming possible synergies for the project. Another student was appointed as management assistance and logistics, responsible of the internal communication and logistics needed for the project. Whereas the other member was the Audio-visual and promotion coordinator, who was responsible for the use of social media, production of videos and photography before and after the event.

One of the teachers supervising the project, represented the voice of DIAK within the team and was responsible for communicating with other instances of the school in order to facilitate processes. It was decided that two of the students of the core team will develop their thesis based on the implementation of the Human Library at Diak and that students who were pursuing some credits or did not complete with some assignments on time, could volunteer in the Human Library to cover one these two options.

Hence, three student volunteers took important roles for the organization of the event, one as a financial coordinator, responsible of the budgeting, monitoring expenses and reporting to the stakeholders of the project. Another student, with relevant experience in the field of security, was a security consultant, responsible for producing a security plan for the day of the event and the third

was the Cultural program coordinator, responsible for creating a cultural and artistic program as a closure of the Human Library.

All the members of the team were responsible for the search for volunteers as Human Books, translators and librarians for the day of the event. A detailed schedule was produced to help to monitor weekly all the activities and delegate functions (Appendix 1).

For the day of the event, a group of volunteers assuming different roles were required to run the Human Library. Therefore, eight students were recruited from different programs at DIAK and a few more volunteers came from outside the school in order to complete the requirements.

According to Schiefer and Döbel (2001), a stakeholder can be a person, a group, or an organization with an interest in or a requirement for a project. The project's activities are influenced by the stakeholders and hence, following are the various active and passive individuals or organizations associated with the project and their relationships in the implementation strategy: DIAK (Placement Organization, Venue), the project team (students, DIAK teachers and staff) and all the volunteers, the Human Books, the project supervisors and sponsors for the project (DIAK, O'Diako).

Allianssi is a "Finnish Youth Cooperation which is politically and religiously non-aligned lobbyist with more than a hundred national youth and educational organisations as members." The organization works with young people to "promote justice, equality, equal treatment, participation and tolerance in a trustworthy, progressive and innovative way." (Allianssi 2010.) For the Human Library at DIAK, Allianssi contributed in supporting the finding of some of the human books from their network of volunteers.

The target group of the Human Library, were all students, teachers and staff at DIAK and the outreach of the project was done through interactions by word of mouth and by the advertising material regarding the event on social media.

### **3.1.1 Assessment of the venue**

According to the Human Library organization, the venue plays a crucial role in the impact that needs to be delivered with the event. By assessing the state of the venue, the organizers can estimate a possible number of participants, Living Books and other volunteers fulfilling the role of staff, promotion and marketing required for the event (Human Library 2011, 48), and one of the most important elements to be considered, is how the space is suitable for people living with disabilities and is equipped with the necessary elements in case of emergency. Therefore, this analysis will help drawing the security plan for the day of the event.

After observing each space at DIAK, the team concluded that the sixth floor was ideally spacious to celebrate the Human Library. It presented very good facilities of toilets, chairs and had a good access for everyone, especially for those presenting disabilities (Appendix 2). Within this assessment, the organizers deduced that the maximum number of participants were within a range of 150 people, for which a 20-22 Living Books was a minimum number of titles for running the Human Library.

According to the guidelines, safety measurements should be considered before the main event. As the Human Library at DIAK was an event for students and staff of the school, the safety was not a big issue compared to Human Libraries that take place in public spaces (Human Library 2011, 28).

As many of the Living Books represent minorities who face discrimination in society due to their sexual orientation, ethnicity or profession, some of them might suffer from an illness or live with a disability, among others; and it is for those reasons that their safety is of very high priority during the designing phase of the project.

In the training about “How to be a Living Book?”, important guidelines were shared with regards to individual and collective safety. More information about special arrangements for the day of the event was collected according to the needs of the volunteers. For instance, due to physical problems, one of the

Human books could not stay all the time sitting on a wheelchair and a comfortable sofa was placed in the reading area, so the person could interact with the readers taking a more comfortable position whenever it was needed.

Likewise, those Living Books who were facing psychological difficulties, such as anxiety disorder, depression or recovering alcoholics or drug addicts, were interviewed privately in order to make sure they understand that during the Human Library their stories might need to be told several times. It was crucial to detect if the volunteers were in the capacity to carry out the role of a Human Book and note their specific needs to make their interaction with the participants more enjoyable by reducing potentials risks of falling in any kind of crisis.

A volunteer student at DIAK, with valuable experience in safety standards, was appointed as main security steward. All the volunteer staff knew beforehand that in case of an emergency, they could reach the steward and each one of them had a directory of phone numbers with each person and the role in the event. In the same way, the steward had the phone number of the security clerk at the reception of DIAK. This person knew what to do in case of emergency.

It was agreed that the steward will carry out the role of Runner (volunteer responsible in introducing the Living Books and the Readers) in order not to have somebody roaming the room and perhaps disturbing the interaction between the Human Books and the readers.

### **3.1.2 Schedule of Activities**

Part of the designing of the project consisted in a detailed schedule containing all the pre-activities and post-actions that are part of the Human Library, with the expected time form the implementation of every task and deadlines. Every week the team met with the aim to discuss the accomplishments of the different tasks, solve the obstacles and analyse the state of the implementation. Every meeting produced minutes of the decisions taken as a team, which helped during the follow up of the activities (Appendix 1).

### **3.1.3 Funding**

After several negotiations and presenting a budget of the expenses for the Human Library which were minimal, the student union O'Diako and DIAK decided to fund the project. The main expenses were related to catering for the training of all the volunteers, and minor expenses for lunch and snacks for all the volunteers during the Human Library. One Living Book was located in a different city and the transportation was covered with the funds of the project.

All the materials, such as posters, leaflets, printing work, among others, were supported by DIAK and the organizing team had access to the printers, stationery set, desk supplies and writing elements that were needed throughout the whole implementation of the project.

## **3.2 Implementation**

According to Barreto "The Project implementation (or project execution) is the phase where visions and plans become reality. This is the logical conclusion, after evaluating, deciding, envisioning, planning, applying for funds and finding the financial resources of a project".

It is important to keep in mind that in every project execution, implementation can be time consuming, usually more than it is planned, and that many external constraints can appear, which should be considered when initiating the implementation phase and all the logistical needs be attended in due time (Appendix 4) (Barretto et al 2008, n.d).

### **3.2.1 Recruiting the volunteers**

In this project case, finding the Living Books was a very challenging task. One of the organizers took care exclusively of this task, to look for suitable volunteers who fulfilled the requisites for being a Human Book and in keeping communication with them. This person recruited many of the Human Books from his social network, but also created a nexus with Allianssi in order to have access to some of their regular volunteers for the events they organize throughout the year. At some point, the search required that the whole team cooperated in order to complete the list of Living Books, with a total of 20 titles.

It is recommended to secure the volunteers for Human Books well in advance, and get few people extra who could be notified in case some of the volunteers get sick, become unavailable or withdraw their participation at the last minute.

Many of the Living Books did not have a good command of the English language, which required finding suitable volunteers to take the role of Dictionaries, whose responsibility consisted in accurately translating the interactions between the Living Books and the readers. The dictionaries were trained about their task and the importance of the principle of confidentiality and one dictionary was assigned to each Living Book which only spoke Finnish language and in those cases when the readers only spoke English.

Finding the Dictionaries was another challenging task, for which the team decided to contact a teacher from Translation studies at DIAK in order to recruit a group of students to volunteer, but this strategy did not work. This a possibility that is worth exploring in an eventual Human Library, as the students from this degree could not only practice the translation aspect, but they can apply other skills such as the ethical and social competencies related to their profession. In order to solve this obstacle, the team invited people from their social network to serve as translators or dictionaries.

### **3.2.2 Promoting the Human Library**

Students were requested to register through an online form, which helped in the organization of the event; for instance with regards to the number of volunteers needed in accordance to the number of attendees. This online registration worked very well, and students needed few reminders to complete it.

As the date of the event approached its due, the organizers started a publicity campaign by promoting and explaining the event to the student community in order to encourage them to participate. The team produced a digital slideshow, a 'catalogue' of the books, with a short explanation or 'blurb' about some of the Living Books they would have the opportunity to meet. The event was advertised through posters, flyers, and e-mail correspondence was sent to all DIAK faculties, as they could help in encouraging their students to attend.

One month prior to the main event, a Facebook page was created to post news, articles, videos and messages advocating for the different minorities who participated in the Human Library and create some interest in them. This platform was useful to share updates and keep the participants motivated.

Additionally, the organizing team visited different classrooms to speak and answer questions about the Human Library and remind the students about the importance of participation in this event.

### **3.2.3 Training**

Based on the Human Library guidelines, the volunteers are required to be part of a training session, which in this case, took place one week before the main event. The Living Books and other volunteer staff were trained about their roles and it was a very valuable opportunity to present and solve burning questions

about their participation. The trainings took place from 18:00-19:00, as many of the volunteers were busy with work or studies (Appendix 6).

Human Books were given simple instructions through e-mail to start to write the description and title they would like to have in their catalogue as this is one of the main outcomes of the training session. Those titles and descriptions that required some corrections or were not ready beforehand, had to be done at the end of the training.

Without a proper title and description, the organizing team cannot try to challenge the prejudices and stereotypes about the minorities represented by the Living Book and without this information the catalogue cannot be printed. Therefore, future organizers must fulfill this task at least a week prior to the event .

Librarians, runners and dictionaries had their own training session the following day after the meeting with the Living Books. The organizing team through a participatory methodology, assigned the different roles to the volunteers based on their preferences. Together with the volunteers, the borrowing process was designed and adapted from the Human Library toolkit, and the participants at the training adopted the operation that suited better this case.

Also, matters regarding safety and security were covered during this training. One volunteer was exclusively appointed to make sure to sort out all the needs of the Living Books during the day of the event, as well as to give reminders to them about taking few breaks, drinking enough liquids, among others. Only three Human Books required a translator, for which the organizers decided to contact two graduated Finnish social work students and another person familiar with being an interpreter.



#### 4. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is paramount to understand when dealing with and advocating for social minorities, who usually suffer from discrimination, that there are certain ethical considerations that require careful foresight in order to protect the participants and volunteers from potential harm (Trudi J. et al 1999, 74).

There are some relevant questions that need to be considered by the organizers. Is the project of the Human Library being arranged under a culture-centered approach? This approach involves recognizing cultural assumptions and acquiring knowledge and skills to overcome them; which allows to take into consideration a deeper picture of the social and cultural determinants of the participants and volunteers, and their crucial role in the project (Dutta 2008, 49). Another question to consider should be whether the Human Library is an initiative that will empower people or will exacerbate even more the vulnerability of the social minorities? Will the event trigger even more discrimination or rejection in some of the participants and how to avoid this situation?

Therefore, a culture-centered approach is essential to recognize the importance of individuals' identities and how they are connected to a wider cultural system in their societies. By acknowledging the cultural aspects of the students, Human Books and other volunteers, a better planning of the project can be constructed and will provide very valuable knowledge about how to make the Human Books more comfortable in their role of challenging the stereotypes and producing sympathy in the participants. Likewise, by taking into consideration students' cultural backgrounds, the organizing team can better figure out the best topics for the implementation of the Human Library.

Some of the topics represented by the Human Books might be controversial and the organization of the Human Library should avoid overlooking any potential danger towards the volunteers who are carrying such important role. Therefore, the event should take into consideration what is the protection route in case of intolerance or in the worse scenario an attack.

Likewise, not all the members of the social minorities are suitable to perform the task of a Human Book. They should be both mentally and physically able and ready to be part of an event with these characteristics. Therefore, mature and stable personalities are the most suitable, as they should be prepared to communicate and interact with wide array of participants; some of them might sympathise with them or some others might possess different types of stereotypes. Overall, Human Books are not actors and they should be ready to use their life experiences, which hopefully will propitiate a reflective mind in the readers.

The Living Books and other staff volunteering, should sign a form of consent in which they stated that they are volunteers for the Human Library, give permission or not to share pictures taken during the event and publish some of their stories. It is ideally recommended that during the day of the event this form of consent has been previously signed (Appendix 5).

The principle of confidentiality must be applied with utmost responsibility. The real names of the Human Books, their contact information or any other sensitive data provided by the volunteers should be handled only by the core team of organizers. Only when the Human Books have agreed and signed the form of consent, for promotional purposes, some of the titles and descriptions without the names of the Living Books; can be published in order to attract the audience of readers prior the event. Additionally, a research permit was also obtained from DIAK authorities for using the video interviews as reference content for the thesis development purposes.

During the holocaust, Nazis used to create documents in which the minority groups were listed and individuals were registered with their names under each category. The organizers should avoid situations that could resemble these unfortunate episodes of the past, by avoiding at any cost that documents in which names of individuals and the social groups they belong to, are made public (Rentola, 2014).

It is very crucial to consider that Living Books should be external people from the school. The Living Books were informed that among the readers we have a diverse group of people from different nationalities, cultural background and

ideologies, but they were not aware who the readers are, and it is very important to keep the interaction between reader and Human Book as objective and neutral as possible. If students were allowed to carry out the role of Living Books, there is a potential risk for future conflicts in the interaction between the students at school.

During the day of the event of the Human Library, the selected staff should be assigned to give reminders to the Living Books to take fresh air or breaks any time they wanted, and remind them about the importance of eating and drinking water or juice at regular intervals.

Some days after the event took place at DIAK, the organizers contacted the Living Books in order to make sure that due to their participation in the Human Library, it did not trigger any kind of negative feelings or episodes of depression or anxiety. In this case, none of the volunteers felt mentally overwhelmed, but physically very tired. Despite some of them felt some level of discomfort for talking about the past or difficult experiences, they expressed that by sharing their life stories with the readers was something meaningful and were thankful for the caring follow up after the event.

## 5. EVALUATION

According to the Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management, project evaluation is "a systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project", in which the goal is "to determine the relevance and level of achievement of project objectives, development effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability" (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2002).

The evaluation in the context of the event organized at DIAK; looks for, on one hand, to evaluate the event from the point of view of the library's objectives for books and readers, and on the other hand, to assess the experience of organizing a human library, in order to improve the quality of subsequent ones.

In order to evaluate the impact of the Human Library celebrated at DIAK, this thesis will adopt quantitative and qualitative indicators, regardless that this is not a research report. The use of indicators will facilitate the presentation of the results and collect evidences of the impact of Human Library.

During the Human Library at DIAK, there were some evidences of students experiencing a shift in their communication about the minority groups. Also, some participants mentioned that they lost their fear to speak about certain elements which are typically connected to some minorities. This feeling of fear, might stem from the lack of knowledge about the minority in question or due to a desire not to hurt the other person. These evidences of a switch in the language are small but important steps towards ending inequality and building empathy.

Through the following indicators, the team gathered quantitative information such as the number of people who visited the library, the number of readers, the number of readings, the number of books who participated in the Human Library, the 'bestsellers', the least read books, and the number of articles (such as blog posts) about the event.

All of these quantitative indicators have been easily discovered with the help of the specific documentation of the library; i.e. the permits, the reader attendance lists, the lending list and the social media report. Apart from the quantitative data, the project team also gathered the qualitative data. The most used instrument in qualitative data gathering from previous human libraries has proven to be the assessment questionnaire for the books (Appendix 7), the assessment questionnaire for the readers (Appendix 8), and the feedback section at the end of the event (Asta Rentola, personal communication 15.8.2014).

The following evaluation for the Human Library at DIAK event will elaborate the summative evaluation of the event. The aim of this evaluation is to identify whether the project activities were implemented as intended and resulted in outputs complying to the goals of the project planning. It intends to analyze the process of implementation, focusing on participation of the stake-holders and the target group, identifying the problems and constraints that were encountered and the important lessons to be learned to make recommendations for the implementation of future projects.

## **5.1 Quantitative Indicators**

“For networks and networking organisations, it is as important to identify indicators that can measure qualitative change as it is to measure quantitative change. At the same time, the concepts of the objective and the subjective in relation to indicators need to be reconsidered. In traditional evaluation processes, indicators are supposed to be ‘objective and verifiable’. In practice, most indicators have a subjective element to (in) them.” (GEM).

The resources and support from the stakeholders were well managed and hence the project was able to keep within the parameters defined for the successful implementation of the event. For the success of the event, it was essential to have at least 15 Human Books attending. The project team had the

contingency plan to outreach to 20 Human Books just in case of any cancellations at the last moment. 19 of the Human Books turned up at the event and over 120+ participants attended the Human Library. The event proceeded in a controlled manner since the project team was supported by 10 Volunteers and 3 Dictionaries. Leading up to the event, a social media campaign was designed to outreach to the students and approx 2900+ screens were reached according to the Facebook insights statistics.

TABLE 1: List of Human Books and Number of Reading Sessions per Book

Book Title	No. of Reads
Drag Queen	10
Roma Person	6
Male Muslim/Asylum Seeker	12
Lesbian	3
Former Substance Abuse worker	9
Adopted	10
Pansexual	15-Bestseller
Visually Impaired	11
Ex-Drug User	13
Gay	7
In Between Two cultures	6
Person with Anxiety Disorder	11
Recovering Alcoholic	7
Sexual Counsellor	10
Survivor of Severe Depression	12
Former Self-Destructive Patient	9
Person with Rheumatism	6
Muslim Woman	8
Physically Disabled Person	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>172</b>

TABLE 2: Indicators for quantitative analysis of the satisfaction of the participants

Parameter	Scale	Results
Idea of Human Library (Likeness)	1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-very impressed)	5- 82,42% 4- 12,5% 3- 2,08%
Selection of Books and stereotypes in catalogue	1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-very impressed)	5- 56,25% 4- 37,5% 3- 8,33%
Service of Librarians	1 2 3 4 5 (1-not helpful at all, 5-very helpful)	5- 81,25% 4- 12,5% 3- 4,17%
Dictionary Service	1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-very satisfied)	5- 62,5% 4- 37,5%
Recommend Human Library to others	Yes. Not sure. No Answer	Yes- 93,75% Not sure- 2,08% No answer- 4,17%
Experience as a Human Book	1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-very impressed)	5- 68,42% 4- 26,32% 3- 5,26%
<b>Total feedback forms collected</b>	<b>Human Books- 19</b>	<b>Participants- 50</b>

TABLE 3: Financial Indicators

Budget	Amount	Used
Travel and Logistics	€500	€75
Refreshments/Lunch Coupons/ Other resources	€150	€120

Hours volunteered by Project team, volunteers and Human Books- 1200+ Hours.

Questionnaires were designed to receive feedback on the event and to get more insights on the possible improvement of the future events. The Human Books were asked to rate their experiences and impressions of the readers from their perspectives. They were able to give feedback on how they felt about the challenges of being a Human Book and perceived benefits of being a part of

the project. The books were able to rate the support of the library staff and evaluate the communication process with the dictionaries and the management team (Appendix 7).

The participants at the event were able to contribute in a satisfaction survey which focused on evaluation of the service of the librarians, satisfaction levels for their interactions with the books, experiences and any specific learnings if any from the reflections of their conversations (Appendix 8). The data from the feedback questionnaires was compiled into a table and the results were quantified in relation to the parameters and scales of the questions (Table 2). A total of 50 participants filled out the survey form by the end of the event which approximates to about 47,6% of the total number of participants at the event. From the table, it is evident that over 97,9% participants at the event were more than satisfied with their interactions and the concept of Human Library and only 2,08% of participant had neutral feelings for the same.

The event managed to successfully get a selection of wide stereotypes in the catalogue, however there were many recommendations for certain books in the future events. Over 93,75% of participants would recommend the Human Library event to others and 94,84% of the Human Books had a very good experience being a participant at the event. The data collected from the librarian highlighted some of the books that were highly in demand and the Pansexual book was the bestseller for the day (Table 1). Many participants were highly interested in speaking to Muslim asylum seekers or ex-drug users or survivors of severe depression as well.

The participant suggested the following additional titles for future events:

- Gay woman and man who are also asylum seekers
- Intersexual person
- Former prisoner
- Man, victim of sexual abuse
- Struggles of a Priest-woman in the church
- Former Neo-Nazi
- Former sexual worker



The event was sponsored by DIAK and the student union O'diako supported expenses for the refreshments and other resources. With a budget of €500 for the travel and logistics, only €75 were used (Table 3). For the event day, refreshments were arranged for the Human Books and after party was hosted for the volunteers and stakeholders. There was a budget of €150 for the expenses however the expenses were well under budget as highlighted in Table 3.0. Cumulatively, the hours volunteered by the project team, volunteers and the Human Books in implementation of the event, it amounted up to 1200+ hours.

## **5.2 Qualitative Indicators**

After the event, debriefing with the event team, the stakeholders and the participants generated a significant amount of qualitative data through personal discussions and feedback forms.

Many Human Books expressed that they felt good in sharing their experiences in a well-structured framework and the event was organized very professionally. Many learnt to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds, exercise their social skills, practice their English and were even curious about their readers' backgrounds and social values. The participants in general were satisfied with how the language barriers were solved by engaging human dictionaries in the event. Some participants felt talking about important things helped them strengthen their own identity and also gave them a space to express feelings and thoughts in an objective manner. Some Human Books felt enlightened about the situations and preconceptions about the LGBT community in different countries. One of the participants expressed contentment in having the opportunity to promote personal responsibility in the recovery process. Many of the Human Books had reassuring comments on the goals of the Human Library project and anonymously left positive feedback with the concept of the event and felt that the Human Library could be a great platform to share the richness in knowledge within different communities.

For the qualitative evaluation in understanding the impact of the event, the team had the possibility to reflect through the learning diaries submitted by the participants and also, a montage of video interviews collected during the event. From many reflections, it was evident that it was a new experience for most of the participants and was certainly productive and knowledge enhancing. The participants felt it was a good platform to facilitate public dialogue and discuss on issues that could even lead to human rights understanding and act as a self reflection approach for social work professionals. Many participants even expressed their interest in replicating the event in their own home countries in Africa and Asia. Many participants did not know what to expect before the event with the interactions, but almost everyone reflected some nuances that made them think and explore first-hand information. One of the participants expressed that it was an effective opportunity to synthesize different ideas and learnings in a single occasion. Many of the interactions were sensitive human issues and perspectives and hence many recipients felt that in some way they were helping them build emotional strength by building empathy and also providing them inspiration through their stories.

The participants had different reasons to choose the books that they selected. Some because they were personally interested in the subjects and had some similar stories, some were curious about certain subjects that have been a taboo subject in their own societies or cultures, and some were just happy to interact with any book that was available. Many of the Living Books faced questions that were generic and expected, however some found questions that were somehow very ignorant and expressed an intolerant or judgmental view on their identities and were surprised by the belief systems of the participants. One of the Living Books expressed feeling of "living in a bubble" until having discussions with some of the participants. It was highlighted that the educational institution has a greater responsibility in building more open perspectives that challenge one's own prejudices especially when one is studying to become a social work professional.

On a critical perspective to the event, there was a lot of useful feedback by the participants as well. Despite a few scheduling problems or human errors, the event progressed well, though some positive suggestions were welcome. One probability was highlighted that future runners and librarians could use tablets/smartphones and have open documents updating the schedule in real time which could make things more effective and easier. Though many people were satisfied with the diversity of the books, a few good suggestions were made which has been highlighted in the above section. Although the event was a serious enough learning experience as a project, one of the pieces of feedback was that there could be more thorough analytical evaluation of the student's experience by a common session perhaps after a few days with opinions exchange would be very beneficial as well. There were a few recommendations of ensuring proper ventilation or air conditioning at the event since it is crucial with large number of people. Perhaps for the future events, more space at the venue could be allocated for avoiding rush and confusion.

On a surface level, many participants expressed that the diversity was celebrated and an intercultural essence of the event seemed to have served the purpose of shifting misunderstandings, prejudices and conflicting ideas to a good degree. Many participants felt the interaction time could be a little bit longer as the conversations seemed to be flowing pretty well and abruptly ending because of the time constraints. However, it was also important to consider that longer sessions could become exhausting for the human books and hence that could be customized accordingly for the future events. Overall, there were many comments about hoping that the project could become an annual event at the school.

Feedback on volunteer experiences and participant experiences, perceived benefits and the likelihood to participate in further events has been an indicator of how many people felt inspired or encouraged to become more engaged in connecting with people from different backgrounds. During the event survey with the audience, overall satisfaction of specific attributes were analyzed. While this may not be a measure of social impact per se, it is one of the most

basic outcomes to be surveyed as the event organizer. Broader measures to evaluate the success of the event would require an understanding of the impact of the event on people's attitudes and behavioral changes, which might need post event long term longitudinal research. However, due to constraints of the time allocated for the project, the interviews with the participants and the human books have provided a broader idea of people's feelings through their quotations.

### **5.3 Challenges**

The organizing team identified the most common weaknesses or threats for the implementation process. It is essential to identify the potential risks and constraints, the probability of them happening, the impact of them and hence that could help in brainstorming possible solutions for the challenges that could come up. It is important to consider various factors such as the Living Books to participants ratio, improper management and communication issues, any possible issues with technology at the last moments, security for the Living Books, or lack of participation during the event. The team was able to identify all the possible issues as highlighted in individual chapters and possible potential to resolve the same (Appendix 3).

The output indicators reflect the outcome and results of the process activities and it has been satisfactory for the stakeholders through the measure of the quantitative data collected throughout the project. The actionable indicators on an ad hoc basis post the event are constructive feedback through the personal observations during the event. It was highlighted by volunteers and participants that the event could have been better managed if the steps of participating in the Human Library were better established in the promotional material prior to the event, facilitating more efficient management during the rush in the beginning of the event. There were a few instances of confusions due to a lack of communication during the commencement of the project, which caused minor inconvenience in terms of waiting time for a few readers. The importance of

reserving books could have also been elaborated during the introduction of the library services, since there were a few instances of participants skipping to other books without having gone through the reservation process.

#### **5.4 Professional Development**

Social work requires a diverse and demanding range of professional, emotional and cognitive skills and thus for the Human Library project, it was a special opportunity for us to develop our skills for our future career. Being a part of the core management team for the project, we had the opportunity to put in use our decision making skills and active coordination with the team members for the efficient and smooth functioning of the project throughout the process of planning and implementation. Being organized was a very essential part since all of the core team members were busy with their personal work, life and studies; thus maintaining a balance was possible only through organizational skills. We were able to learn various skills from different team members and were able to build a good synergy as a team. Task management was an essential part to function well within the team.

One of the core skills that we developed most was our communication skills as professional social workers. It is very essential for any project work and a professional or be able to communicate effectively since there are so many channels such as emails, task management tools, team meetings, web and online conferencing, collaboration and social media tools, etc.. It was important to build visual literacy skills to deliver messages that would generate interest and curiosity to be able to communicate efficiently the objectives and needs of the project to the participants. Visual communication is a key component in building engagement with the target audience and it requires good analytical skills to develop final results.

As social work students, it was important for us to communicate in many different ways with many different people since we were dealing with a spectrum of people from different socio-economic, ideological and identity differences. Communicating the idea of the project to get 20 Human Books and 10 volunteers had to be an effective task since it required pitching the idea in an attractive way to gather support voluntarily. It challenged both written and verbal skills and required ability to express the idea to a wide variety of people in a diverse context. It was important for us to be culturally responsive as we were dealing with people from different racial and ethnic communities. During the event day, it was important for us to be able to build a good rapport with the participants and the stakeholders to make them comfortable with the camera and ask them correct questions to guide them with their interviews. This required active listening skills as one had to be present in the situation all the time and have the ability to move on to new conversations quickly. It is really important to listen effectively and reflect back on the participants conversations to make them feel understood by acknowledging their statements. Active listening builds therapeutic alliance and the participants or interviewees find it comfortable to confide in the listener, thus establishing trust and respect early on.

It was important for the team to have a strong Emotional Intelligence quotient since we were dealing with many stories of people from disadvantaged background and it required a high level of self-awareness, empathy and sensitivity to others. It was important to be able to think and reflect spontaneously when discussing with the Human Books and creatively make the atmosphere more relaxed when talking about serious subjects.

We had to learn to practice setting boundaries for ourselves since we were keeping busy with our own personal lives and needed time for self-care. The team was supportive in helping to create a healthy work-life balance by dividing tasks efficiently with achievable time limits so that it did not generate stress on any individuals. The project gave a good opportunity to build and strengthen our

empathy quotient since it gave a possibility to interact with a lot of different people and understand them intellectually, culturally and emotionally.

The project activities were divided well and we were able to work with our strengths and capacities. Since the work was associated with people who have experienced oppression, marginalization, physical or mental disability, addiction and trauma, it could have been emotionally challenging but it helped us as individuals to get better with our inner strength and emotional and psychological balance. Also, getting through the project required a good sense of humor. Often facing challenges during the process implementation, some of the colleagues had a good sense of humor to bring out the funny side of project management and deal with situations in a relaxed manner. Project scheduling was a core management skill that we learnt since it becomes much easier to finish a big task in small steps if done efficiently. During the project, budget management was important. Since we had limited resources and financial support, we were able to do the cost control well and deliver the objectives within the constrained limits. In addition to dealing with the participants and the Human Books, it was important for us to maintain collateral relationships, manage work in long distance and have good organizational skills.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

According to the logical deductions based on the data collected through feedback post event from the stakeholders and the participants of the project, it is justified that the event was successful, having achieved its goals. The project was able to facilitate discussions between people from different ideologies, identities and socioeconomic backgrounds by creating a safe space. The Human Books represented different minorities and other groups of people who face prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination and racism, and their efforts in voluntarily participating for the project were invaluable. The project was professionally organized, followed the learning objectives of the study modules of each of the team members, and was efficient in bringing people together – managing time, commitment and enthusiasm to make it all happen. Additional to the project, a video was produced documenting the interviews of the participants and the Human Books, and the process of implementation of the event which could contribute as a resource material for future events and projects at DIAK.

Human Library is the perfect environment to reflect on the power imbalances of society and realize how in the end the different struggle of minorities are interlinked. As Samantha Wehbi rightly expressed it; “Starting from an understanding that all forms of oppression are interconnected, the disability rights activists I have worked with have sought to work as allies with members of other activist organizations, including those working against sexism, homophobia, classism, and sectarianism and on social issues such as war, violence against women, worker exploitation, state corruption, and the mistreatment of prisoners of conscience (Baines D. 2012, 143).”

The most successful cases from the latest research, were those actions that trigger in the privilege group an identification with the minorities, and eventually mobilized collective action (Reimer et al 2017, 123). In the feedback collected from the participants in the Human Library at DIAK, several people gave



positive evidences of identification with the disadvantaged Human Book, even though they come from countries where these minorities are being discriminated, but it would require a deeper evaluation to detect how this identification, which in some cases was a new experience, could present long term consequences.

The Human Library can become a platform for the participants to reflect upon the imbalances and differences of the society, for instance how a person living with disabilities manages in the everyday life or the oppression faced by an asylum seeker under the possibility of being deported back to a conflict area.

Students of social services participating in a Human Library can have an opportunity to evaluate the range and impact of social systems and the role of relationships in people's lives, as well as practicing the understanding of social histories of individuals and the groups they represent, and how are the dynamics of the different kinds of power oppressing the minorities. Additionally, a Human Library can also help the participants to find a space of empathy and identity towards those who have suffered oppression, by examining her or his own social location (privilege or underprivileged situation) which will help them to overcome prejudice and become a better professional in the future (Clifford et al 2009, 29-36).

The success of the Human Library is based on the fact that it facilitates the engagement of individuals through a non-aggressive conversation. How people talk and the content of their conversations is one of the main key components to produce a positive change (Apss 2014, 215). As it was noted in the evaluation, it's incontrovertible that intergroup contact helps to reduce stigmatization towards minorities. Hence, spaces like the Human Library are very necessary for the different cohorts of students of social services.

Nevertheless, there is no academic evidence after 17 years that Human Libraries have been celebrated around the globe, or how long and deep has been the effect within the communities that were exposed to the methodology. Can the Human Library methodology be used as an advocacy tool for community cohesion policies in the public realm? Can it act as a preventive

social work tool by building community cohesion and building a better and peaceful society? Is the Human Library an occasional novelty event or can it become a long term sustainable project by working with the civic authorities? Do conversations lead to better understandings and tolerance, that would be a good question to reflect in the longer term. This experience should be the trigger for finding even more creative methods for more intergroup contact opportunities which propitiates empathy and identification considering that research has found that those are the more successful traits among international cohorts of students coming from different walks of life.

## 7. REFERENCES

Allianssi 2010. Suomen nuorisoyhteistyö - Allianssi. Accessed on 21.2.2017.  
<http://www.alli.fi/etusivu/>

Apps, Judy. 2014. The Art of Conversation: Change your life with confident communication. WILEY publication.

Barreto Leonelha Dillon: Project Implementation, SSWM; Accessed on 01.09.2017 <http://www.sswm.info/content/project-implementation>

Barreto D., Buzie, C. 2008. NETSSAF participatory planning approach. A guideline for sustainable sanitation planning. Accessed on 28.09.17; <http://www.susana.org/en/resources/library/details/1344>

Beverley Burke, Philomena Harrison. Anti-Oppressive practice, 1998. Macmillan Education UK; Accessed on 20.04.2017 <https://goo.gl/aUunkq>

Bogue, Robert 2005. Use S.M.A.R.T. goals to launch management by objectives plan. TechRepublic. Accessed on 20.2.2017. <https://goo.gl/JK2R51>

Cox, Lisa; Tice, Carolyn; Long, Dennis. 2016. Introduction to Social Work: An advocacy-based profession. Sage Publications.

Derek Clifford and Beverley Burke. 2009. Anti-Oppressive Ethics and Values in Social Work. Palgrave Macmillan.

Douglas, Tom. 2000. Basic Groupwork. Second edition. Routledge, London. Accessed 15.10.2015. <http://reader.eblib.com.anna diak.fi>

Dutta, Mohan 2008. Communicating Health: A cultural centered approach. Polity press, Cambridge.

GEM (Gender Evaluation Methodology) n.d.. Setting gender and ICT Indicators; Accessed on 05.05.17; <https://goo.gl/x4Jqny>

Human Rights Centre, 2012 ; Human Rights Education in Finland, Accessed on: 22.10.17; <https://goo.gl/n3Bwhn>

Human Library n.d.. Human Library Organization. Accessed on 17.2.2017. <http://humanlibrary.org>

James Trudi ; Platzer Hazel 1999. Nursing Ethics 1999, Vol.6(1)

Jung, Carl. 1960. Psychology and Religion. Yale University Press. London. Accessed 21.10.2015. <http://reader.ebib.com.anna diak.fi>

Jung, Carl. 2009. Modern man in search of a soul. Routledge, Abingdon.

Little, Nick; Nemutlu, Gulesin; Magic,Jasna; Molnar, Balint. Don't judge a book by its cover! The Living Library Organizer's Guide 2011. Accessed on 01.09.2017 <http://alli.fi/binary/file/-/id/720/fid/4586/>

Locke, Edwin A. 2001. Motivation by goal setting. In Golembiewski, Robert T. Handbook of organizational behavior (2nd ed.). Marcel Dekker, New York. Accessed on 20.2.2017. <https://goo.gl/JT5Hd4>

Lydia Hogewoning 2012. Anti-oppressive practice and social trinitarianism: An interconnection of faith and social work principles. Accessed on: 28.09.17; <http://www.nacsw.org/Publications/Proceedings2012/HogewoningAntioppressive.pdf>;

Meredith, Jack R., and Mantel, Samuel J. Jr. 2012. Project Management: A Managerial Approach. John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey. Accessed on 14.2.2017.

<https://goo.gl/VZNLDL>

Nzira, Viola; Williams, Paul. 2008. Anti-Oppressive practice in Health and Social care. Sage Publications.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2002. Glossary

of KeyTerms in Evaluation and Results Based Management. Accessed on 21.2.2017.

<http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/2754804.pdf>

Reimer, Nils Karl; Becker, Julia C; Benz, Angelika; Christ, Oliver; Dhont Kristof; Klocke, Ulrich; Neji, Sybille; Rychlowska, Magadelena; Schmidt, Katharina; Hewstone, Miles. 2017. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Vol.43(1), pp.121-136 Intergroup Contact and Social Change . Accessed on 01.09.2017  
<https://goo.gl/GLzCjK>

Rentola Asta, personal communication 15.8.2014.

Schiefer, Ulrich and Döbel Reinald 2001. MAPA Project - a Practical Guide to Integrated Project Planning and Evaluation. OSI-IEP Publications, Budapest. Accessed on 15.2.2017. <https://goo.gl/YA3vTo>

Taylor Fitz-Gibbon, Carol 1990. "Performance indicators", BERA Dialogues (2), ISBN 978-1-85359-092-4.

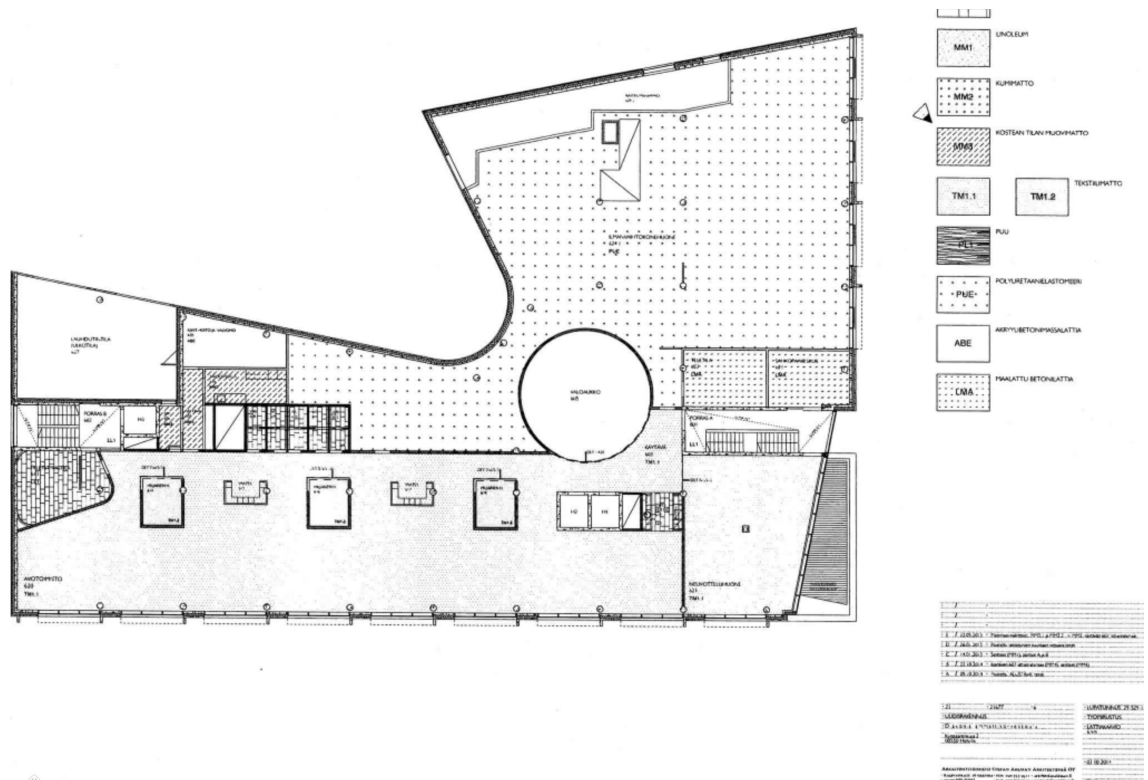
The Outsiders. 2016. Accessed on 28.09.17; <http://the-outsiders.org.uk/project/human-library>

## 8. APPENDICES

## Appendix 1

[illegible]

## Appendix 2



### Appendix 3

These relevant questions were analysed within the team. We used a simple scale from Low, Medium or High or Yes/No depending on the question. It is highly recommended to always check this list for future Human Libraries taking place at the school.

- Have you checked the venue is suitable for your type of o event and the number of people attending it?
- Have all structures been inspected and approved by a competent person?
- Is there any danger for the Living Books and the participants? (Low)
- Are there sufficient entrances/exits clearly marked?
- Are there adequate numbers of fire extinguishers?
- Are fire points clearly marked?
- Is there a means of warning people of fire?
- Is the fire alarm in working order and recently checked?
- How will disabled persons be evacuated from the site? (A trained steward was selected for this task).
- Is there a plan to deal with any emergency, e.g. fire, cancellation of events, rules and emergency services?
- Are all persons organising the event aware of the plan? (Volunteers will be informed during the trainings)
- Is the first aid provision suitable for the number of people attending the event.

- Is the site free from tripping hazards, such as cables, potholes, tent pegs?  
(Cables of the computers need to be checked to avoid accidents).
- Is there means of communication between key organisers and Stewards?
- Are there adequate methods of communication with the public especially if site needs to be evacuated, e.g. loud speakers?
- Are there adequate toilets for the number of people likely to attend the event?
- Are toilets visible and adequately signed?
- Is there suitable W.C. provision for people with special needs?
- Is there a location where people can obtain information about the event?
- Are there adequate rubbish bins around the site?
- Is the access to the site suitable for those with special needs?
- Do you have a procedure for dealing with accidents?
- Are Stewards trained and competent to deal with queuing public?
- Is there an adequate means of communicating with the public?
- Do we have stewards List, showing adequate numbers of staff?
- Do we have duties list, showing details of tasks, locations, times?

## **Appendix 4**

### **Logistics**

Within the logistics, there were had several practical tasks that needed to be completed before the main event, and which are going to be explained in detail below.

**Printing:** Posters and leaflets were ready two weeks before the event and placed around DIAK. The catalogue, list of tasks for the librarians and runners,



directory with phones, borrowing lists, library cards, posters with specific themes to decorate the venue, evaluation form for the participants, Living Books and other volunteers, were printed after trainings and a week prior the Human. In order to fulfil this task, DIAK's management borrowed their printers and gave the required materials.

**Dietary requirements:** Living Books and all the volunteers were offered snacks during the trainings and lunch and snacks during the day of the main event. This is an important aspect, as participation in the Human Library can be very active and demanding for them. Dietary information about those volunteers that required special attention was collected via e-mail before the trainings, such as gluten and lactose intolerance, diabetes, food allergies, among other important food related aspects that needed to be taken in consideration beforehand.

**Arrangement of the venue:** One day before the venue was set for the Human Library. It's not recommended to leave this task for the same day of the event, as the different areas need to be completely marked in a logical way. The spaces were arranged in an order to keep a smooth and easy flow for the participants and resting stations with snacks, water, juice, coffee, tea, milk etc. for the Human Books. Also, the posters were arranged in the corridor and waiting room.

**Day of the event:** First, the participants had to queue to reach the borrowing desk. There the librarians were waiting to help them out and provide guidance. While waiting in the line, they could read the posters placed in the corridor and check the catalogues with the different offer of Human Books and their descriptions; this helps to speed up the process, as they knew already which title they would like to read once they arrived to the table. After booking a Human Book, the participants went to the waiting area. Runners came to the waiting room to invite the readers once the Living Book of specific interest was available.

The participants were taken to the reading area by the runners and introduced to the Human Book. The start of the interaction between the reader and the book was noted by the runner at that moment, and they were announced five minutes before completing 20 minutes of conversation, about the ending time.

The runner notified to the Living Book whether other reservations were waiting or not. The Living Books had the chance to visit the toilet, take a break to drink water, have a snack or catch some fresh air. If the Living Books were resting, it was marked as “booked” for 20 minutes and participants were told to wait or book another title. The runners notified to the librarians whether the Human Book was free to be borrowed, needed to have a constant updating about the reservation timetable of the Living Books.

In several cases, the readers and Human Books wanted to continue their interaction. If the Living Book didn't have any reservation it was booked for a second session of 20 minutes' period. But if the Living Booked was borrowed already or reserved, the participant could choose to decide whether to wait or read another title in the meanwhile. If the waiting list for that specific title was too long, the librarians told the readers about the challenges to meet that Human Book again and suggested the participants to choose another one. A title could be read by maximum three readers.

Once, the attendees were ready and have finished with all the reading sessions, they were taken to a survey area, where a volunteer collected the evaluation of the readers and help them reach the exit.

The Human Library lasted for four hours, plus 30 minutes more for the Human Books in order to answer a written survey, hear about their interactions with the readers, how they perceived this experience and note their recommendations for the future events. In the same way, after the Human Books left, we had a feedback session of 30 minutes with the all the volunteer stuff to collect data about their experience under the role they played during the event.

After the Human Library, the organizing team met to review the information collected during the event, classify the feedback and report the expenses to the donors.

## **Appendix 5**

### Consent Form

#### Consent for use of quotes, photographs and video

I, undersigned, give permission to the Human Library Organization and DIAK to use my photograph, videotaped images, and quotes or information gathered during the Human Library at DIAK event in documents, published materials and electronic presentations.

Agreed to by:

Signature

Print Name

Date

## **Appendix 6**

### Human Library Training material

Access on: <https://goo.gl/CTEBPA>

## **Appendix 7**

### Questionnaire for Human Books

Date:

Name:

Your title as a Book:

Age:

Gender:

Nationality/ies:

Are you a member or an NGO? If yes, which one?

How was your experience as a Book today? (1-very bad, 5- very good)

How was your impression of your readers today?

(1-not motivated to learn, 5-interested, very sincere attitude)

How helpful was the description of your title as a Book, which you provided before the event? (1- inappropriate, insufficient, 5- very clear, well described)

How do you evaluate the support of the Library staff (librarians and organizers)?

(1-not helpful at all, 5-very helpful)

If you used a dictionary, please assess your communication with it.

(1-not helpful, poor, 5- very appropriate)

How would you rate the duration and appropriateness of your working hours?

(1-inappropriate, too long, 5- very appropriate)

How did you feel your elders benefited from reading you?

How did you benefit from being read?

What were the most frequently asked questions?

What was the most challenging part of being a Book?

For the next Human Library, what advice would you give?

To future books:

To future organizers:

To librarians:

To future readers:

For the presentation of the catalogue:

Would you be ready to be a Book again?

Other comments?

Thanks for your comments and your time!

## **Appendix 8**

### Questionnaire for the Readers

Dear Reader, thank you for taking some time to fill in this short questionnaire, to share your experience in reading one or more of the Human Books. Your comments will contribute to further developing the methodology of the Human Library. All answers will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Your age:

Your gender:

Have you been a reader in the Human Library before?

Which Books did you borrow?

How much did you like the idea of the Human Library?

(1-not at all, 5- impressed)

How did you like the selection of the Books and stereotypes presented in the catalogue? (1-not at all, 5- impressed)

Comments:

How would you rate the service of the librarians?

(1- not helpful at all, 5-very helpful)

If you used a dictionary, how satisfied were you with it?

(1-not at all, 5-very satisfied)

What was the most important experience for you while you were reading the books?

Have you learned anything new in reading a book or several books from the Human Library?

Would you recommend others to be a reader at the Human Library?

Other comments:

Thanks for your comments and your time!